

REMARKS

The outstanding Office Action has been carefully considered and the application has been amended in order to respond to each and every one of the Examiner's objections and rejections set forth therein. Claims 3, 4, 6 to 13, 18, 20 to 22, and 24 to 27 are presently pending in this application; claims 1, 2, 5, 14 to 17, 19 and 23 having been cancelled; claims 3, 4, 6 to 13, 18, 20 to 22 having been amended; and claims 24 to 27 having been added by the present amendment. Favourable consideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

First, the applicants note with appreciation that the Examiner considers original claims 9, 11, 12 and 18 to 22 as being allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejections under 35 USC 112, 2nd paragraph and to include all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1, 2, 14 to 17 and 23 having been deleted, the objections and rejections that were raised against those claims are now moot.

New independent claims 24 and 25 have been added to better define the invention over the prior art cited.

New submitted claim 24 is directed to a prefilter including all the limitations set forth in original claims 1, 2, 14, 15 and 19. Since none of the prior art cited by the Examiner discloses nor renders obvious the limitations recited in claim 19, new proposed claim 24 is believed to be allowable.

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New submitted claim 25 is directed to a prefilter including all the limitations set forth in original claims 1, 2, 14, 15 and 18. Since none of the prior art cited by the Examiner discloses nor renders obvious the limitations recited in claim 18, new proposed claim 25 is believed to be allowable.

The other remaining claims are dependent claims of either one of claims 24 and 25 and thus, they are also believed to contain allowable subject matter.

New claims 26 and 27 have been added to better cover other aspects of the invention. The Examiner will note that new claim 26 recites the limitations of original claim 16; and new claim 27 recites the limitations of original claim 17.

In response to the objection to claim 6, the word "bottom" has been replaced by -underside- -.

The Examiner will also note that the preamble of each claim has been changed to read "A prefilter", in line with the preamble of the main claims 24 and 25.

For a purpose of consistency with the new proposed claim 24, minor modifications have also been made to claims 3, 4 and 21.

AMENDMENT TO THE DESCRIPTION

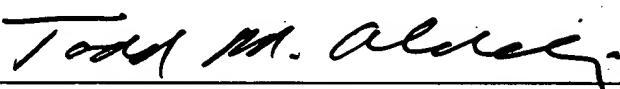
Pages 4 and 5 have been amended in order to provide a clear support to the new proposed independent claims 24 and 25.

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In view of the above amendments, the present application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance and an early notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,


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